

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-12 ADP-00 CCO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 AID-20 FBO-01 PM-09

H-02 INR-10 L-03 NIC-01 NSC-10 M-03 OC-06 OPR-02

PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SCA-01 A-01 OMB-01 SS-15 SY-10

SCS-03 INRE-00 ACDA-19 RSR-01 /173 W
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O 091915 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2031

DIA WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 5269

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR PARA. 7 AND MRN (VICE 5149)

DEPT PASS CAIRO

SITREP 10

E. O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PINS LE

SUBJ: INTERNAL SECURITY SITREP 10

1. HOUR- LONG EVENING BRIEFING OF DAO AT ARMY HEADQUARTERS INDICATES
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G-2 CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC RE CURRENT SITUATION IN BEIRUT AND ELSEWHERE

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IN COUNTRY FOLLOWING DAY OF GREATER QUIET REPORTED OUR SITREP 9. DESPITE CONTINUING FEDAYEEN BIF- TALK RE HOLDING FAST IN CAPMS, ETC., G-2 BELIEVES PRES FRANGIE'S " FIRM AND INTELLIGENT STAND" PLUS ARMY TACTICS WHICH HAVE INFLICTED HEAVY CASUALTIES ON FEDAYEEN TO DATE HAVE PLACED THEM IN " TOUGH" POSITION. THEY SEE THIS AS HAVING HAD SOBERING EFFECT WHICH HAS HELPED " MODERATE" FEDAYEEN LEADERS GAIN BETTER CONTROL OF ELEMENTS WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE CONTINUE MONT PROVOCATIONS. AT SAME TIME, AT LEAST FIVE MIXED ARMY- FEDAYEEN " CEASEFIRE TEAMS" (COMPOSED OF 6 OFFICERS FROM EACH SIDE) ARE NOW SAID TO BE PATROLLING AREAS OF CONFRONTATION AROUND BEIRUT WITH TASK OF IDENTIFYING AND STOPPING OUTBREAKS OF FIRING BEFORE THEY SPREAD. (NO ONE IN G-2, HOWEVER, HAD MUCH DEFINITE INFO AS TO EFFECTIVE OR INFLUENCE OF THESE TEAMS, WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN FIRED ON ON AT LEAST ONE OCCASSION.)

2. G-2 VIEWS SYRIAN THREAT AS LIMITED AND NOT EXTENDING BEYOND ALLOWING FEDAYEEN REINFORCEMENTS INFILTRATE INTO SOUTHEAST LEBANON.

G-2 ESTIMATES 2-3,000 FEDAYEEN WITH UNKNOWN QUANTITIES OF HEAVY WEAPONS NOW IN SOUTH BEKAA- ARKUB, COMPARED WITH AROUND 800 PRIOR MAY 2, AND -- ON BASIS OF SPOILING OPERATION , INCLUDING AIR STRIKES, MOUNTED AGAINST THEM IN AREA BETWEEN ' AIN ' ARAB AND RASHAYA TODAY -- BELIEVES ARMY ABLE HANDLE THEM. NO REGULAR SYRIAN FORCES REPORTED TO HAVE ENTERED LEBANON SO FAR. G-2 SAYS ARMY CONTROL MAIN NORTH- SOUTH ROAD (HASBAYAH- MASNAA) AS WELL

AS DAMASCUS- BEIRUT ARTERY AND IS CONFIDENT OF KEEPING FEDAYEEN BOTTLED UP IN REMOTE AREAS TO EQST AND SOUTH OF THOSE ROUTES.

3. G-2 ALSO REPORTS THAT SYRIAN ATTEMPTS FOMENT SUBVERSION AMONG LEBANESE MUSLIMS AND LEFTISTS HAVE NOT OCERLY SUCCESSFUL. (ARMY ENCOURAGED BY FAILURE ON PART OF LOCAL MUSLIMS AND LEFTISTS SO FAR TO PUSH THEIR OPPOSITIONS TO GOL POLICIES TO EXTREMES, AND BY WHAT IT REGARDS AS " NEUTRAL" ATTITUDE ADOPTED BY EGYPT WHICH HAS HAD EFFECT OF MAKING SARG PROCEED CAUTIOUSLY.) SAME GOES, ACCORDING

TO G-2 , FOR GUN- RUNNING FROM SYRIA, WHICH THEY BELIEVE -- THANKS IN LARGE PART TO EFFECTIVE ARMY CONTROL MEASURES ON ROAD CROSSING BEKAA -- NOT ON SCALE LIKELY TO CHANE BLANCE OF FORCES IN COUNTRY AS A WHOLE.

4. G-2 ALSO REPORTS THAT BEIRUT REFUGEE CAMPS HAVE NOW BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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LARGLY EVACUATED BY NON- COMBATTANTS (I. E., WOMEN AND CHILDREN) AND THAT CIVILIAN CASUALTIES THEREIN HAVE NOT BEEN PARTICULARLY HIGH, SINCE FIRING AND AIR STRIKES AGAINST FEDAYEEN POSTIONS HAVE BEEN ACCURATE AND UE OF UNDULY DESTRUCTIVE WEAPONS (E. G., ARTILLERY AND

AERIAL BOMBS) HAS DELIBERATELY BEEN DEPT TO MINIMUM. ARMY AND SECURITY FORCES' CASUALTIES SINCE MAY 2 REPORTED AS 35-38 KIA AND AROUND 150 WOUNDED (MANY NOT SEVERELY). FEDAYEEN CAUSALTIES ESTIMATED AT LEAST FOUR TIMES THAT FIGURE (WE BELIEVE THEY EVEN HIGHER). ARMY' S EQUIPMENT LOSSES PUT AT 4 APCs, 2 ARMORED CARS, 3 TANKS AND SMALL NUMBER OF UTILITY VEHICLE -- MOSTLY DUE TO FEDAYEEN RPG FIRE.

5. CONTACTS WITH INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES (ISF) INDICATE CONFLICTING VIEWS RE SITUATION IN BEIRUT AS OF 1800 Z. BEIRUT CHIEF OF POLICE EXPRESSED OPINION THAT SITUATION " VERY BAD". HE INDICATES THERE HAVE BEEN SOME GROUPS OF ARMED MEN SEEN IN TOWN AND IMPLIED THEY COULD BE FEDAYEEN. CAPT ANTOINE SAADE, IN OFFICE DIRECTOR GENERAL ISF, EXPRESSED OPTIMISM RE MILITARY SITUATION BUT UNCERTAINTY RE POLITICAL SITUATION VIS- A- VIS POSSIBLE ACTION BY SYRIANS AND EGYPTIANS. SAADE REPORTS ISF PATROLS AND FORCES INCREASED IN CITY TONIGHT IN ANTICIPATION OF BOMB INCIDENTS. ONE BOMBING THIS AFTERNOON IN HAMRA STREET AREA. NO CASUALTIES AND LIMITED DAMAGE. SAADE CHARACTERIZED EXPLOSION AND NUISANCE AND NOT SERIOUS ATTEMPT CAUSE HARM.

6. EMBASSY PERSONNEL AND DEPENDENTS SAFE AS ARE MEMBERS AMERICAN COMMUNITY. AIRPORT STILL CLOSED.

7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH WE BELIEVE G-2 MAYBE BIT TO SANGUINE RE ONLY LIMITED SYRIAN INVOLVEMENT, MILITARY SITUATION AT MOMENT DOES APPEAR TO HAVE IMPROVED TACTICALLY. HOWEVER, IT IS STILL FLUID AND DEPENDS ON SUCH FACTORS AS EVOLUTION OF SYRIAN AND EGYPTIAN ATTITUDES, ABILITY OF EXTREMISTS TO SOW DISORDER AND EVEN PANIC BY CARRYING OUT BOMBING AND ROCKETING IN BEIRUT, AND EFFECTIVENESS OF MIXED PARTROLS IN KEEPING LID ON FEDAYEEN IN CAMP AREAS SO THAT RENEWED EXCHANGES OF FIRE WITH ARMY DO NOT OCCUR.

HOUGHTON

NOTE BY OC/ T: NOT PASSED CAIRO.

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